

3 ranging from 1-2, inclusive, and y ranging from 0-3, inclusive.

1 48. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a
2 composition including a substance from the chemical family $\text{SiO}_x\text{N}_a\text{H}_b$, with x
3 ranging from 1-2, inclusive, a ranging from 0-1, inclusive, and b ranging from 0-1,
4 inclusive.

1 49. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a
2 mechanical hardness less than a corresponding mechanical hardness of the wafer.

1 50. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a
2 mechanical hardness less than a mechanical hardness of silicon.

1 51. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a
2 thickness in the range of 10-100 micrometers.

1 52. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a
2 thickness in the range of 1-10 micrometers.

1 53. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a
2 thickness in the range of 0.05-1 micrometers.

1 54. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating material on the
2 wafer support surface has a thickness of 10-100 microns.

1 55. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the wafer support surface
2 has a surface area no larger than a surface area of a wafer configured to be
3 positioned on the wafer support surface.

1 56. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the wafer support surface
2 includes a plurality of support structures.

1 57. (New) The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the support structures are
2 point contact structures.

1 58. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the wafer support surface
2 includes a vacuum ring.

1 59. (New) The apparatus of claim 59, wherein the vacuum ring is a line
2 contact vacuum ring.

1 60. (New) An apparatus of claim 45, further comprising a skirt positioned
2 at a periphery and in a non-planar relationship to the wafer support wafer surface.

1 61. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the wafer support surface
2 provides a mechanical support for a wafer and the skirt is positioned to be in a non-
3 mechanical supporting position relative to the wafer.

1 62. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the skirt is sized to permit a
2 wafer positioned on the wafer support surface to extend beyond a periphery of the
3 skirt.

1 63. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the skirt and wafer support
2 surface are sized to be at least equal to a size of a wafer positioned on the wafer
3 support surface.

1 64. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, further comprising at least one
2 wafer transporter coupled to the process chamber.

CONCLUSION

Applicant makes the above amendments to put the claims in better condition for examination.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 8003-391 for any fees due in connection with this paper.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 4 June, 2001

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